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ABSTRACT

The central theme of the booklet is that integration does not just occur naturally as a result of merely placing students of different race or ethnic groups in the same school setting. It occurs by the special efforts of classroom teachers who encourage student friendship formations. The booklet contains a variety of teaching strategies which could help to maximize the formation of student friendship. These teaching strategies come from research literature and/or from a sample of classroom teachers whose classrooms have experienced high levels of integration. Brief summaries from over 20 research studies are provided and successful classroom teachers are quoted. Teachers can promote sound achievement and integration of minority students by: (1) exhibiting a warm, unprejudiced, accepting, and optimistic attitude to all students; (2) using informational methods that teach about other cultures and customs; (3) teaching directly social skills and rearranging groups or seating to encourage students to make contact with new students; and (4) structuring learning situations in more democratic ways, using cooperative group learning methods, involving students in a multitude of different tasks, and by encouraging parental involvement. (LH)

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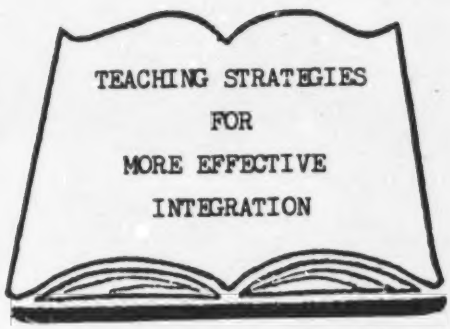

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Preface

Integration does not just occur naturally as a result of merely placing students of different race or ethnic groups together in the same school setting. Indeed, Carithers (1970) after a study of school desegregation from 1954-1970, concluded that, "there seems to be general agreement that interracial contact per se will not bring about increased tolerance or acceptance." (p. 41).

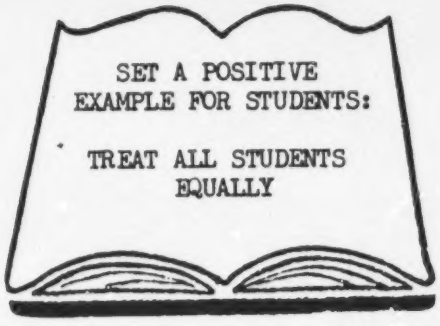
Integration, instead, is achieved by the conscious effort, particularly of classroom teachers. The specific efforts of classroom teachers can be catalytic in encouraging student friendship formations. This booklet contains a variety of teaching strategies which could help to maximize the formation of student friendships. These teaching strategies come from the research literature and/or from a sample of classroom teachers whose classrooms have had high levels of integration.

In examining this booklet, remember that, as Allport (1959) stated over 20 years ago, the problem of integration is multifaceted and thus requires multiple approaches in its solution. None of the strategies presented here will, in isolation, effect integration. Rather, these strategies, as part of a total effort, can be helpful at enhancing integration.

TEACHER ATTITUDES (AS PERCEIVED BY STUDENTS)

St. John (1971), in a study of 1000 students, found that the most important factor for sound achievement and integration of black students was a teacher who was optimistic about their performance and who anticipated high expectancies for their success.

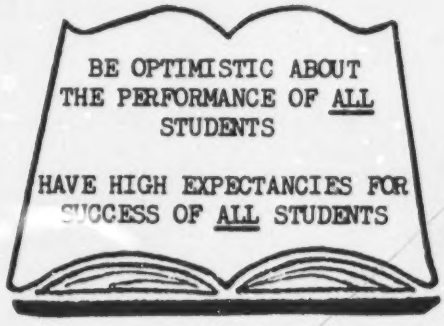
TEACHER: "I expect my students will be very successful. I come in every week with the attitude that this will be a good week."



Sheehan (1978), in a study of 84 fifth grade classrooms, found that minority students had a tendency for increased contact with Anglo students in classrooms where they perceived less tension and anxiety.

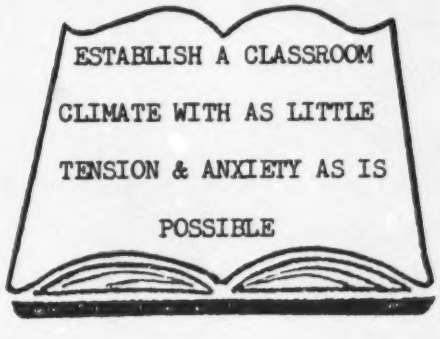
TEACHER: "I don't care if I spend the whole month of September stressing how to get along with one another . . . I'll do it!"

TEACHER: "I think my style of sensing and handling problems is important . . . I will do something low key to correct the problem . . . I settle it quietly and immediately . . . there is no shouting."

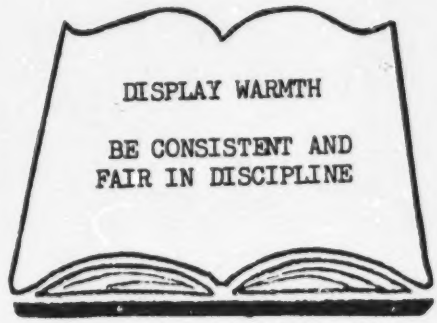


Forehand et al. (1976) and Cartledge & Milburn (1978) found that modeling behavior of teachers was an important prerequisite for student attitudes. Thus, teachers must set a positive example by treating white and minority students equally in order that students might demonstrate lack of bias and show interest in forming interracial friendships. i.e. Casserly & Garrett (1977) found that "disparate treatment in the classroom increases the resentment and tension between white and black students."

TEACHER: "I don't play favorites in my room . . . everyone has a turn . . . that is stressed . . . a big word in my room is SHARE."



Siegel et al.(1978), in Help For The Lonely Child, concluded that "the general atmosphere and . . . the demeanor of the teacher must be warm and sufficiently accepting to nurture socialization." They suggested that teachers display warmth by greeting children individually, eating with students on occasion, providing moments of humor in the classroom, telling students they are loved (or showing it) when the need arises, and being consistent in discipline.



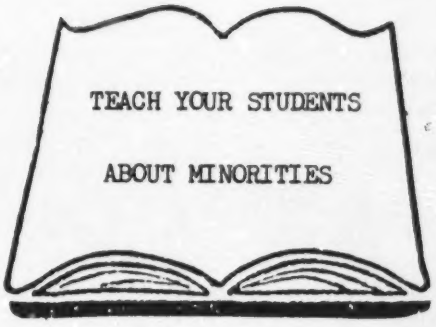
TEACHER: "I am not afraid to show my emotions, my love . . . I may hug a student . . . The students know I am human . . . I show it, and they in turn demonstrate it in their actions."

TEACHER: "If a behavior problem arises we always settle it immediately . . . the students are satisfied . . . there is an immediate penalty, an action . . . the students see this and are satisfied that everything was handled fairly."

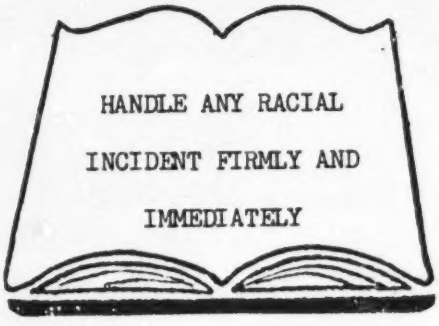
CONCLUSION: The attitude of the teacher can be a powerful determiner of the extent of social integration in the classroom. By exhibiting a warm, unprejudiced, accepting and optimistic nature to all students, the teacher can subtly encourage students to act in a similiar fashion and thus encourage greater socialization.

INFORMATIONAL METHODS

Hayes & Conklin (1953) found that when white students read about, role played, and listened to experiences of minority students there was increased acceptance of other race students. Proshansky (1966) concluded that "persons with considerable information about a specific group tend to have more favorable attitudes toward that group." Forehand et al.(1976), after studying 200 schools, found that in schools with the most positive race relations, students had learned about minorities and teachers had discussed race in their classrooms.



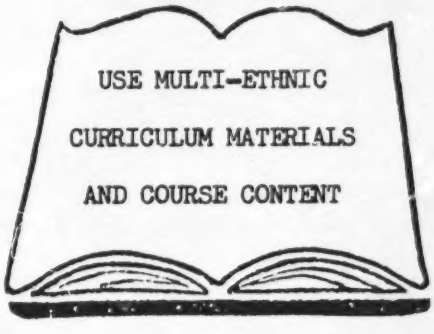
Judith Porter (1971), in Black Child, White Child, stressed that teachers should cover the history and culture of different ethnic groups and also that teachers should handle any racial incidents immediately and firmly, thus using them as teaching devices.



TEACHER: "We had a racial incident between a black student and a Puerto Rican student with fighting and name calling. I immediately discussed the incident with the class and at different times during the year as well. Such incidents are not allowed!"

TEACHER: "Last year we had a racial incident involving name calling. I talked to the students privately immediately after the incident. Then we had a group discussion."

Litcher & Johnson (1975) and Katz & Zalk (Note 1) concluded that students who were taught with multi-ethnic curriculum materials had more favorable racial attitudes. Geneva Gay (1978) suggested that all curriculum areas should reflect different ethnic life styles, i.e. the physical education program should include ethnic dances, music instruction should incorporate songs of other cultures, art programs should include the art and artists of other countries, and life skills programs should include ethnic cooking.

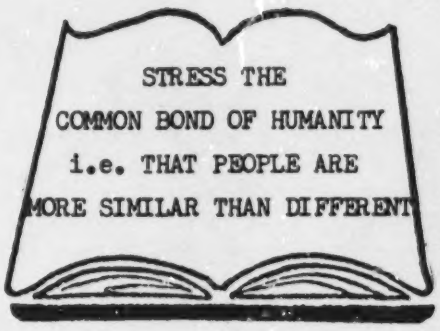


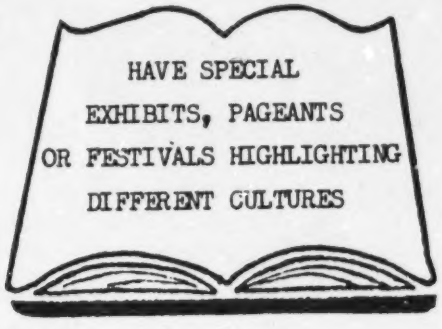
TEACHER: "I always tie my teaching of other cultures into my music lessons."

TEACHER: "When we do career awareness, I point out different jobs in other cultures."

Schaefer & Millman (1982), outlining techniques to reduce prejudice in children, suggested that teachers stress the "brotherhood of man" by providing information about other cultures, particularly that people are more similar than different even though customs vary from people to people.

TEACHER: "We stress that we all have basic needs no matter where we are—we have some commonalities."





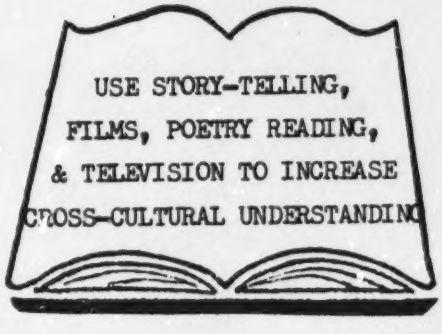
Allport (1959), starting with the premise that "no person knows his own culture who knows only his own culture", suggested that students participate in special exhibits, festivals, or pageants to learn more about the various groups that make up our heritage.

TEACHER: "We did a project in conjunction with the Bilingual Department on Spanish cooking."

TEACHER: "With a good group I have students do special research projects in this area."

Bellucci & Elbaz (1982) recommended several informational methods as "gentle doses of antiprejudice." These methods included having students tell stories based on large photographs of children from different backgrounds, film festivals to increase cross-cultural understanding, poetry readings (i.e. "The Would-Be-Hungarian"), and relevant public and commercial television programs (such as "Vegetable Soup" or "Self-Incorporated").

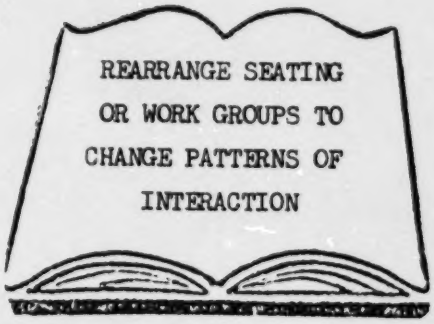
TEACHER: "I have large pictures concerning feelings which we talk about from time to time . . . I stress feelings, that you shouldn't put down others . . . I do this when we need a change of pace."



CONCLUSION: Informational methods can be effective at combating prejudice and encouraging more favorable racial attitudes. By learning more about the culture and customs of people different from themselves, students tend to develop more positive attitudes towards other people, a necessary prerequisite to establishing new friendships.

TEACHING SOCIAL SKILLS OR REARRANGING THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Epstein (1968) recommended that teachers examine patterns of interaction in their classrooms using sociometric techniques and then use this information to try to change the patterns if necessary. For example, teachers could rearrange groups or seating to encourage students to make contact with new students, give isolates first choice of work groups, or assign isolates to work with more outgoing students.



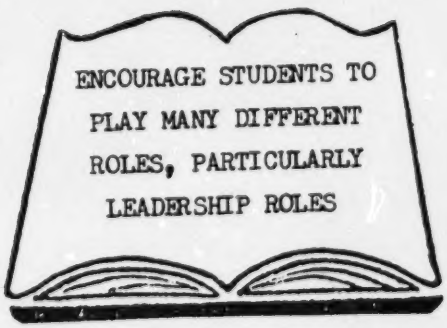
TEACHER: "Sometimes I form work groups, sometimes they do . . . I try to break up cliques intentionally any way I can."

TEACHER: "I change students' seats every three weeks in order for students to get to know one another."

TEACHER: "I try to place a quiet student next to a talkative student, or a bright student next to one not as bright. I change seats every 3 months."

TEACHER: "I use the results of the sociograms, particularly information on isolates. I try to get these students more involved: i.e. I might plan a play activity in which a student not picked would do well."

Lane & Beauchamp (1955) recommended that teachers encourage students to play a wide variety of roles in their classrooms "so that all may be recognized for their contributions." Cohen (1980) suggested that teachers give all students opportunities to show leadership.

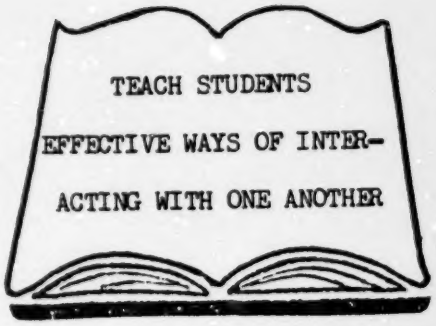


TEACHER: "If a student has a special talent in art I make him/her the leader of the group to design the monthly bulletin board."

TEACHER: "Some cliquey black girls in my room were really good at Double Dutch. I asked them to show some white girls how to master this skill. Soon they included the white girls in their group."

TEACHER: "Every two weeks I post 29 jobs for students to bid on . . . thus every student can have a job every week."

Glock et al.(1975) recommended that teachers take desegregation one step further by teaching students how to get along with one another. Asher & Oden (1975), in experiments with isolates, found that those who were coached in social skills had significantly higher friendship ratings. Stocking et al (1982) suggested a three step process in teaching social skills: discussion and demonstration, structured practice, and appropriate feedback.

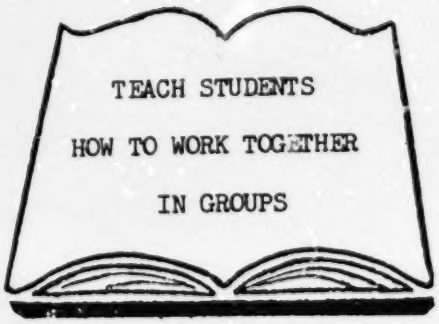


TEACHER: "I spend a lot of time initially getting students to get along . . . this is a necessary prerequisite to teaching."

TEACHER: "We talk about feelings . . . how to play together . . . how to share . . . that we are all equal . . . that there are no favorites."

TEACHER: "On the sociogram I found that one student was not selected very often, I talked to that child to try to get him to change. I think the sociogram has value to see who the students are relating to."

Cohen (1980) recommended that teachers extensively use group work in such areas as social studies and science, but also recommend that the students "be taught skills for working in groups . . . as these do not develop naturally or automatically."



TEACHER: "I try to do a lot of small group work. I form groups by matching personalities and mixing students by race and sex . . . The students change their seats to be with their groups for the duration of the project, maybe 4-5 weeks. Then new groups are formed and new seats are assigned. If a group has problems working together we discuss why it is not working out . . . The most important goal of having students work together as a group is for them to learn how to work together. The subject matter is secondary."

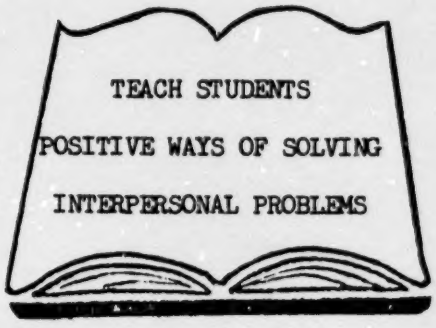
Cohen (1980), in studies of integrated schools, found that in schools with an excellent climate in human relations, the teachers taught students positive ways to solve interpersonal problems and how to treat one another in a positive fashion rather than allowing students to fashion their own norms for interpersonal behavior.

TEACHER: "I come down hard on anyone who doesn't respect others. Fighting, poor sportsmanship, temper displays, or criticizing others are not allowed."

TEACHER: "We use the kit: Respect For People and Property at least once every two weeks, and if an interpersonal problem arises in class we handle it immediately. I do not like having unresolved problems."

TEACHER: "I usually spend the first two weeks teaching manners . . . we see filmstrips and posters on the importance of getting along . . . I continually stress that we have to be a happy family."

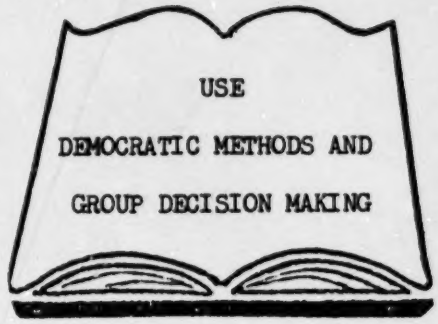
TEACHER: "I always start off the year with a unit on differences, likenesses, and feelings . . . cooperation is something I am always stressing . . . it is a year-long project."



CONCLUSION: Direct teaching of social skills, tactfully done, and manipulation of groups within the classroom can help to promote a greater social integration.

CLASSROOM STRUCTURE

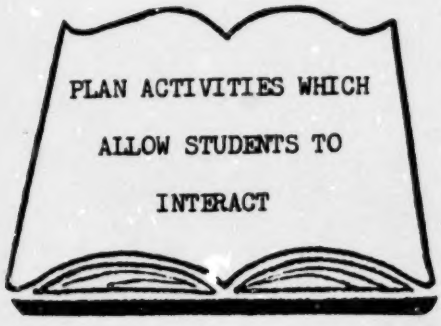
Jennings (1949), in a three-year study, found three classroom factors that helped promote sound social development: warmth of the classroom teacher, use of democratic methods and group decision making, and activities permitting interaction. Glidewell et al. (1966) likewise found that delegation of some of the teacher's power leads to increased interaction and less interpersonal conflict. Hallihan (1976) in a study of 51 classrooms, found that in democratic classrooms there was a better distribution of student friendships with fewer isolates and leaders.



TEACHER: "The class makes the classroom rules at the beginning of the year . . . we also vote a lot during the year."

TEACHER: "I let students make decisions but not until later in the year. First I teach them how to make sound decisions, i.e. weighing the pros and cons. We gradually work into situations where they make more and more decisions."

TEACHER: "The students are given a choice of activities, some options, 3 or 4 times per week. I find I can get them more motivated by giving them some choices."

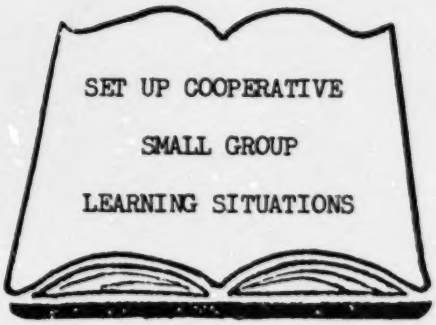


Hallihan (1976) also found that "the single most important factor affecting the formation and development of friendship among children is the amount of interaction in which they engage."

TEACHER: "One special activity we do is the Magic Circle. Students sit in a circle and pass a stick around. Only the student with the stick may talk. I give them a discussion topic, such as what disturbs you the most about the class, and students take turns responding. At the end I select a student and the other students in turn says something good about the student."

TEACHER: "In one special language arts activity I have the students write letters to one another."

A study conducted by Brown et al.(1977) concluded that the most important factor for the establishment of positive interracial contact was the structure of the classroom allowing for cooperative learning situations. A recent synthesis of research on cooperative learning by Slavin (1981) revealed that changing from a traditional competitive classroom to a cooperative classroom usually improves achievement and also intergroup relations.

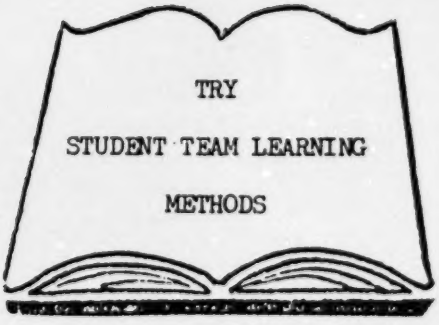


TEACHER: "My students are very cooperative. They help one another. We don't stress competitiveness against one another . . . instead we stress a group or team effort."

TEACHER: "My class is not very competitive. If students see someone needs help they will help rather than hinder. The students empathize with one another, almost like brothers and sisters."

TEACHER: "If things get too competitive in my classroom I try to change the situation."

TEACHER: "In group work the students compete against one another as groups but cooperate with one another within groups . . . This is a good way of getting them to be more cooperative."

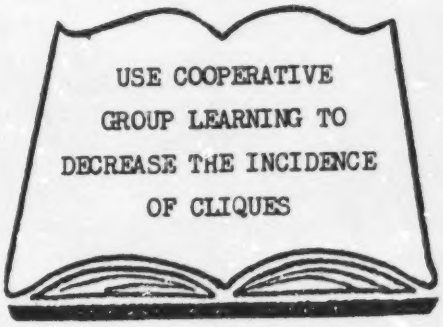


Student Team Learning methods have been the most widely used cooperative learning methods according to Slavin (1981). In a typical situation, the teacher first presents a lesson. Then students meet in small racially and academically mixed groups to master the material. Finally, students take individual tests. Each student's contribution to the team score is based upon that student's prior test results. Teams with the highest weekly score are given some kind of recognition.

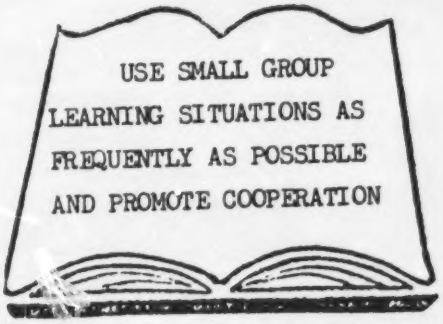
TEACHER: "We do small group work in language arts, science, or social studies. When I choose students for groups I mix them by abilities and by sex."

Hansell et al.(1981) studied cooperative group learning, competitive group learning, and individual learning situations in seven elementary classrooms. The researchers concluded that the average clique size decreased in classrooms where cooperative group learning situations were used.

TEACHER: "We do small group work in Science and Social Studies. Sometimes I form the groups, sometimes they do. I tell them the best way, perhaps, is not to pick your best friend (in this way trying to encourage them to pick others . . . I try to break up cliques intentionally any way I can. This is my big thing.)"



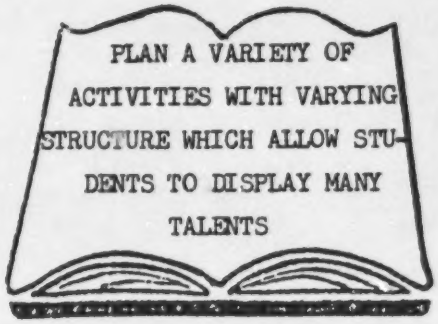
Bossert (1979) conducted extensive observations of four classrooms over a two-year period. His finding, presented in Tasks and Social Relationships in Classrooms, show that classroom teachers have a tremendous impact on the way that student friendships are formed. Bossert found that when teachers used primarily a recitation mode, often evaluated students publicly, and promoted academic competition, friendships developed based primarily on achievement levels. In classrooms where there was little recitation, where students frequently worked together in groups, and where cooperation was promoted, interactions were more frequent, were constantly changing, and were not based on achievement.



TEACHER: "There is little academic competition in my class . . . I don't foster that . . . I stress cooperation."

TEACHER: "On a cooperativeness scale from 1 (not) to 10 (very), my class started off the year at -4, but they will be at 10 by the end of the year because, with frequent small group work, I encourage cooperation."

Serow & Solomon (1979), in a study of 99 classrooms, found that interracial friendships are more likely to occur in classrooms where there is a variety of activities and structures. Damico et al (1981), after studying five middle schools, concluded that "in classrooms organized around multiple tasks . . . the private nature of evaluation plus a cooperative ambience leads to friendships that are fluid and influenced by shared interests rather than achievement." Rosenholtz (1982) concluded that in classrooms where students are able to demonstrate their skills and talents in many different areas there is less a chance that a student's performance will be seen as consistently good or bad, resulting in fewer social isolates.



TEACHER: "Any way that students have talent I am willing for them to express it . . . When doing small group work, especially, each student contributes to the group according to his/her talents."

TEACHER: "In some parts of the day I am very structured, such as in Math or Reading, while in Physical Education or Science or Social Studies I am more lenient. I allow talking or have students get into groups. I also have flexible lesson plans so that if something of interest to the students comes up we will talk about that."

TEACHER: "If someone does an especially great job in any area, art, music, etc., I will point this out to the students."

TEACHER: "If a student does outstanding work, I will point this out to the other students. I may call a student to my desk to congratulate him/her on a job well done, or I give the student an award, or I display the work on the bulletin board."

TEACHER: "The students know each other's strengths . . . if one student does badly on a paper another student might say: 'Yeah, but he draws well' or 'He can run fast.'"

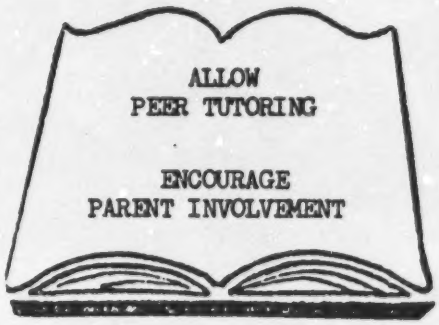
Hawley et al.(1981), in a synthesis of teaching strategies relevant to integration, found, in addition to the ideas presented above, that allowing for peer tutoring and encouraging involvement of parents in the classroom were helpful techniques in furthering the goals of integrated education.

TEACHER: "I seat students who will be out of the room a lot (i.e. for Chapter 1 or bilingual help) next to helpful students."

TEACHER: "Parents are always invited by me (in a letter) at the beginning of the year to come into the classroom at any time."

TEACHER: "If there is a problem with a student I will telephone the parent immediately, or if a student does an outstanding job I will send home a report to the parents."

TEACHER: "If a parent has a particular skill or talent or interest which fits into a unit of study, we will invite the parent to come in."



CONCLUSION: The way that teachers structure learning situations in their classrooms can have a significant impact on the nature of student interactions and friendships. Classrooms that are more democratic, use cooperative group learning methods, involve students in a multitude of different tasks and encourage parental involvement offer more fertile ground upon which student friendships might grow and flourish.

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Reference Notes

1. Katz, P. & Zalk, S. Modifying children's racial attitudes. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Toronto, Canada, March 1978.

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